

Message Text

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ACTION PM-03

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9136

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 14721

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, RP

SUBJ: LORAN A

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (FOR REFERENCE LINE)

REF: STATE 265418

1. ON RECEIPT REFTEL, LORAN A HANDOVER WAS DISCUSSED WITH EXEC. SEC. MELCHOR, AND A BRIEF OUTLINING SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE USG MIGHT BE ABLE PROVIDE AFTER PHIL CG TAKEOVER WAS GIVEN TO HIM. MELCHOR ASKED FOR CHANCE TO REVIEW MATTER WITH ADMIRAL RUIZ AND CG COMMANDANT OGBINAR BEFORE GIVING FINAL RESPONSE. AS RESULT THAT DISCUSSION, PHIL NAVY CHIEF OF STAFF CAPTAIN VELASCO REQUESTED APPOINTMENT AND CALLED ON CHARGE DEC. 13 TO EXPLAIN PHILIPPINE POSITION.

2. AT DIRECTION EXEC. SEC. MELCHOR, CAPTAIN VELASCO STATED THAT, NOTWITHSTANDING GOP DESIRE TO PROCEED WITH LORAN TAKE-OVER, PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT HAS CONCLUDED THAT IT WILL BE UNABLE TO DO SO BY DEC. 31. VELASCO SAID EMBASSY WOULD SHORTLY RECEIVE NOTE FROM DFA SETTING FORTH JUSTIFICATION FOR GOP POSITION. (FYI: VELASCO NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT FAILURE OF PHILIPPINE COAST GUARD TO PREPARE LOGISTICS SYSTEM TO SUPPORT LORAN STATIONS AND TO TRAIN ADEQUATE NUMBER OF TECHNICIANS TO TAKE CARE OF SYSTEM WAS BASIC JUSTIFICATION, END FYI.)

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3. CHARGE ASKED VELASCO WHAT PERIOD OF EXTENSION GOP BELIEVED

WOULD BE NECESSARY BEFORE LORAN SYSTEM COULD BE TAKEN OVER. VELASCO SAID HE WAS UNINFORMED BUT BELIEVED AT LEAST ONE YEAR WOULD BE NECESSARY; HOWEVER, HE RECOMMENDED THAT PHILIPPINE COAST GUARD EXPERTS AND LORTAD GET TOGETHER TO DEVELOP DEFINITIVE TIME TABLE FOR EVENTUAL TAKEOVER.

4. QUESTION OF FINANCES WERE NOT DISCUSSED IN MEETING, OTHER THAN VELASCO'S STATEMENT THAT GOP WISHED LORTAD TO CONTINUE ON SAME BASIS AS PRESENT. THIS QUESTION AND OTHER COINCIDENTAL WITH EXTENSION LORTAD WILL NEED TO BE CONSIDERED FURTHER IN PHILIPPINE COAST GUARD-LORTAD DISCUSSIONS OF QUESTIONS RAISED REFTEL.

5. COMMENT: PART OF PROBLEM WE EXPERIENCING WITH THIS PROPOSAL IS REFLECTION OF COMMUNICATIONS GAP IN GOP, PART IS OBVIOUS CASE OF COLD FEET ESPECIALLY AT POSSIBLE LOSS OF PRESENT MATERIEL AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT, BUT PART ALSO SEEMS ENTANGLED IN RECENT REASSERTION OF MOVE TO SEPARATE PHIL NAVY AND COAST GUARD COMMANDS. LATTER HAS MADE BOTH NAVY AND COAST GUARD WARY OF CHANGES IN LOGISTICS OR OTHER SOURCES OF SUPPORT. WE DO NOT THINK LATTER ISSUE CAN BE SETTLED IN TIME TO ENABLE IMPLEMENTATION OF LORAN A HANDOVER ANYTIME SOON UNLESS INTERESTED WASHINGTON ADDRESSEES ARE WILLING RISK PROTRACTED OUTAGE OF THIS EQUIPMENT. IF DEPENDABLE AND CONTINUOUS OPERATIONS ARE REQUIRED, SOMETHING AKIN TO PRESENT LORTAD SEEMS ADVISABLE FOR TIME BEING. WOULD APPRECIATE WASHINGTON COMMENTS. SCGOP CONCURS.

ARNOLD

NOTE BY OC/T: EA TAKE AS CORRECTED COPY, ALL OTHERS TAKE AS ORIGINAL.

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